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ABSTRACT

The "Transitional Year" program is an effort on the part cf the Ccllege cf Arts and Sciences at the University of Missouri to assist academically disadvantaged students from inner city high schccls in the Kansas City area. Specifically, the program attempts to meet the special educational and social needs of the inner city student when he first attends the university. The services provided include: tutoring, counseling, academic assistance, develop ental courses, special programs, and financial aid. This report describes the participants, the different programs and activities offered, and the results. Eighty-five percent of the entering freshmen in the Transiticnal Year 1969-70 who completed both semesters were eligible to continue at the University in the fall semester 197C without any change or adjustment of academic policy concerning eligibility. Compared to the low rate of success of inner city students attending the University in past years, this percentage suggests the effectiveness of the program. (AF)

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REPORT

ON

TRANSITIONAL YEAR 1969-70

College of Arts and Sciences

UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI - KANSAS CITY

Urban Problem Solving Program

University of Missouri

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION

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REPORT FOR THE TRANSITIONAL YEAR 1969-70

URBAN PROBLEM SOLVING PROGRAM

University of Missouri

Introduction

The College of Arts and Sciences initiated the Transitional Year Program in September 1968 with funding through the University of Missouri Urban Problem Solving Grant Program. Refunded for the academic year 1969-70, the Transitional Year is an effort on the part of the College to assist academically disadvantaged students from inner city high schools in the Kansas City area. Specifically the objective of the program is to meet the special educational and social needs of the inner city student when he first attends UMKC. Although it is not unusual for a student to experience difficulty in the transition from high school to college, these difficulties are both increased and magnified when the student's background includes personal and educational disadvantages. Minority students from primarily de facto segregated high schools, in addition, face manifold problems in adjusting to a campus situation where the large proportion of the students are majority group members.

The Transitional Year has developed a variety of services to assist the student:

1) to strengthen areas of educational deficiency

2) to negotiate his course work successfully

3) to cope more adequately and realistically with problems of readjustment

These include tutoring services, counseling services, academic assistance, developmental courses, and special programs. . In addition a number of offices of the University have made valuable contributions to other aspects of the Transitional student's life on campus. These services, while not included in the special grant funding, have been an essential part of the total effort to meet the special needs of the disadvantaged student at UMKC. They include, financial aid assistance, speech therapy, and special programs focusing on the contributions of minority groups to American life, culture, and society.

Out of the knowledge and experience gained through the Transitional Year, the University and secondary schools are in a better position to make decisions which concern curriculum, instruction, counseling, and developmental programs.

The Transitional Year had its base of operation in 1969-70 in the Academic Advising Office of the College of Arts and Sciences. Mr. Donald F. Cheadle who served as director of Transitional Year had his official appointment in the College of Arts and Sciences as Director of the Academic Advising Office, and it was through his office that the various services available to Transitional Year students were coordinated.

Participants

Participants in the program were selected from several groups. These included May 1969 high school graduates from inner city areas, Upward Bound

"graduates", Focus (a national program which identifies and helps with the college placement of able but disadvantaged youth), and continuing Transitional Year students who still needed the special assistance of the program. (In addition some of the Transitional Year services were made available to those New Careers participants whose backgrounds, interests, abilities and goals indicated the inclusion of some college level work in their planned New Careers Program. Participants in the federally funded New Careers Program offered through UMKC's Division for Continuing Education are from the same target area from which Upward Bound and the Transitional Year draw their students.)

Participants for Transitional Year 1969-70 were largely sought from the group of students admitted to UMKC for the first time as freshmen in the fall 1969. The Admissions Office identified 137 students as prospective Transitional Year candidates.

These students were identified largely on the basis of their high school rank and various test scores; these indicating either singly or in combination that the student would in all likelihood experience considerable difficulty in his course work at UMKC. Of the 137 students identified, 79 were from the target area schools and therefore were the prime candidates for the Transitional Year.

A number of inner city students attending UMKC who had served as tutors in the 1968-69 Transitional Year Program worked throughout the summer prior to the beginning of the fall '69 semester to encourage the admitted students to "follow through" on their admission and actually register for classes at UMKC. As early as May 1969, the Admissions Office of UMKC began identifying pros-

pective Transitional Year students for the 1969-70 academic year.

The student workers made calls, personal visits to the home to see the student and his parents, brought the prospective student to campus, assisted the student with regard to applying for financial assistance when needed, made appointments with advisers, and guided him through the process of registration. From the very first contact with many of the students from the inner city schools, the extra assistance and help needed by them is apparent. One problem identified by an admissions counselor, for example, is simply "getting the students to send in the necessary forms and take placement tests". Student tutors were extremely helpful in assisting the prospective student with the variety of details necessary for college admission and registration. This personal contact was both effective and beneficial. The students who did this work were conscientious and diligent. They worked closely with the Director of Transitional Year, Admissions Office, Academic Advising Office and Student Aid and Placement Office. They were good representatives of UMKC in the community, and by virtue of both background and age they were able to communicate effectively to prospective students the Transitional Year Program and the University's interest in their education.

From the above group of 79 students, and from other students with similar backgrounds who applied and were admitted later than this group, 80 entering freshmen matriculated and registered for classes at UMKC in the fall semester 1969 as Transitional Year students. These new freshmen were not formally identified immediately as Transitional Year students because of problems which had

arisen the first year in counseling new students concerning their need of Transitional Year services. However all were part of, or benefited in some way, from the Transitional Year. Those who participated minimally were those who did not take advantage of the special academic services but did utilize the financial assistance available to Transitional Year students.

Fifty-three continuing students (students who had been at UMKC one year or more) were recommended for continuance in the Transitional Year. This made a total of 133 students involved in the Transitional Year program at the beginning of the fall semester 1969. Not all of these students completed both fall and spring semester. The following table indicates the number and percentage of students who completed two semesters 1969-70.

Classification	Enrolled Fall 69	Enrolled Fall & Spring 1969-70	
"E" Freshmen	80	60	(75%)
Continuing students	53	43	(81%)
Total	133	103	(77%)

Of the total number starting, it can be noted that 103 or seventy-seven per cent completed both semesters of the academic year. Of the "E" freshmen, 60 students or seventy-five per cent, completed both semesters.

Students who did not enroll in the spring or who enrolled and subsequently withdrew dropped out of the university primarily because of a combination of personal problems which seriously impaired their academic work. In all but two of the 30 cases, the student's grades were below average, but there was in some instances evidence of academic potential. Had other factors not been more press-

ing it is likely that a number of these students eventually could have managed their course work successfully. Two students, one a freshman, one a continuing student, dropped out for personal reasons with grades above a "C" average.

Sixty-one (61) per cent of the total number (133) of Transitional Year students starting Fall 1969 were eligible to continue at the end of the academic year 1969-70. Thirty-nine (39) per cent of this total group either became ineligible (16.5%) or dropped out of school in either the fall or spring semester (22.5%).

The Program and Activities

The objectives of the Transitional Year have been met through the various academic assistance aspects of the program. These include:

1) developmental courses

2) Academic counsel and program planning

3) tutoring program

4) personal counseling

1. Developmental Courses

Developmental courses were offered through the Division for Continuing Education at no cost to Transitional Year students. Study skills and aids for increasing academic skills were incorporated into the reading development course. These courses were better accepted by the students than in the past year. One reason being, the courses were revised and modified to meet the special needs of

these students. Materials were used, readings required, etc. which were of interest, or stimulated the interest of the inner city student. Another improvement was that the courses were presented as special awards or scholarships. This changed the image of the course from that of an onerous task to that of a special privilege.

2. Academic Counseling

Each adviser in the academic advising office spent part of his total advising time with Transitional Year students. Knowledgeable about college requirements and regulations and familiar with the past experience of numerous students, these advisers were eminently qualified to assist the Transitional Year student. Academic programs were carefully planned in helping students interests, abilities, and the college requirements. The course load per semester as well as the individual courses elected by Transitional Year students were carefully planned. Periodic checks of progress were made by advisers as a regular part of the advisement program. Mid-semester grades were used as one indication of needs and/or problems. Second semester programs were planned in light of any problems experienced in the first semester.

Advisers indicate that they spent three to four times more time with Transitional Year students than they did with their regular freshman advisees.

3. Tutoring Program

Tutoring continued to be an essential and key part of the second year program.

Students and college instructors served as Transitional Year tutors. Both individual and group tutoring sessions were arranged. Additional meetings of some of the college introductory courses were scheduled for purposes of extra assistance for the student who was encountering difficulty. The departments of English, Math, History, Biology and Geography have supported and offered extra class periods for tutoring purposes.

Student tutors volunteered for work in the Transitional Year. The Director sought a recommendation from the department involved before any volunteer student tutor was approved for a given tutoring area. Some departments gave added support to the tutoring program by allowing their upper-division majors to receive academic credit in a situation where their tutoring could be closely supervised by members of the department. A special course for tutors was offered by the Director of the Reading Center in the summer, 1969.

Professional tutors especially appointed to help Transitional Year students were either part time instructors in the College, former college instructors, or graduate assistants.

All tutors were expected to keep records of their work, and evaluations of their students' performance, effort, achievement level and motivation.

A history tutor working with individual students in relation to their course work in World History had 25 students in the fall semester and 33 students in the spring. Regular meetings were scheduled for both group and individual tutoring. Material from the course was explained and discussed, study aids were provided, techniques for outlining lectures and texts were presented. For these sessions,

seven students were classified as "very regular" in attendance in the fall semester; twelve students were "very regular" in the spring. Four students in the fall and thirteen in the spring did not attend with any degree of regularity.

A special effective writing course offered to prospective Transitional Year students utilized the services of three student tutors. The ratio of students to tutors in this class was 2 - 1. The overall evaluation of this class was that it was successful. A trial and error approach permitted the instructor to experiment with new methods---adopting those which were successful and discarding those which were not. Two students in the course were quite successful and on this basis were permitted to bypass English 110 and start in English 120. The experience in the course will be utilized for planning new courses along these lines.

An academic adviser, who has led History discussion groups which included Transitional Year students, and has tutored and advised Transitional Year students as well made the following observations.

1) The primary obstacle to adequate performance of Transitional Year students was lack of motivation.

2) The tutoring helped develop self confidence and self esteem which contributed to increasing motivation.

3) When resource persons from inner city were incorporated into class discussions or group meetings "there was a decided change in rapport and greater response to the class by these students".

4) It is essential that records on individual students be kept by the tutors. These reports are valuable for advising students, recommending special assistance, and making evaluations of the program.

5) Closer communication needs to be maintained between the departments of the College and the administrators of the program.

6) Tutors often serve the Transitional Year in a variety of ways: friend, confident, model, etc.

Most tutors, both faculty and student, became quite involved with their students and the program. Often the tutors sought jobs and other forms of aid for the Transitional Year students.

One tutor made extensive contacts in the community on behalf of Transitional Year. Her contacts included church, civic, professional, and service organizations. (*see appendix A). Through these efforts a Transitional Year fund was established at UMKC to be disbursed at the discretion of the program director for emergency financial aid. Often financial crises arise for Transitional Year students which need immediate solution. Usually short term small loans can handle these crises and the Transitional Year fund meets this need.

The effects of one department's group tutoring sessions were summed up by the tutor as follows: "The students who attended these classes consistently brought their grade upward two letters. The class was open to all students in the History department, although the formative purpose was to serve the Transitional Year students. More of the regularly enrolled students attended than Transitional Year students, but the Transitional Year students who did attend were faithful and active participants. The most difficulty was encountered in engaging their attendance except for a crash test review that is not particularly beneficial to a low achiever in a history survey course of this nature".

Faculty Transitional Year tutors often "compared notes" and this led

to coordinated approaches in several courses.

Twenty student tutors served in Transitional Spring semester 1970. These students tutored in a variety of fields in the College.

The tutor's reports indicate achievement and progress of individual students. The Transitional Year students evaluations of program indicate the strengthening and supportive aspect they personally experienced in the tutoring sessions.

Financial Aid

Funds allocated to Transitional Year students through the Office of Student Aid and Placement were a vital part of the assistance, provided by the University to the Transitional Year program.

During the 1969-70 Academic Year, a total of 68 Continuing and Prospective Transitional Year Students received $83,760 in Student Financial Aid. The breakdown was:

Students	No.	Scholarship	Grant	Loan	Work-Study	Total
Prospective	43	$ 7,660	$13,200	$10,350	$18,650	$49,860
Continuing	25	2,350	12,150	9,650	9,750	33,900
Totals	68	$10,010	$25,350	$20,000	$28,400	$83,760

Results

The data concerning Transitional Year 1968-69 which follows considers only Transitional Year students completing the two semesters of 1969-1970 academic year.

At the end of the spring semester 1970,. grade averages of the Transitional Year students indicated that 78.6% of the total number of students were eligible to continue in the fall 1970 semester.

TABLE I

ELIGIBILITY/INELIGIBILITY TRANSITIONAL YEAR STUDENTS
FALL SEMESTER 1970

Classifications	"E" Freshmen		Continuing Students		Total Number of Students	
Eligible	51	(85%)	30	(69.8%)	81	(78.6%)
Ineligible	9	(15%)	13	(30.2%)	22	(21.4%)
Total	60	(100%)	43	(100%)	103	(100%)

Eighty-five per cent of the new freshmen fall 1969 were eligible to continue in the fall 1970; sixty-three per cent of these students were eligible to continue without any special action taken; an additional twenty-two per cent were continued by special action upon petition according to regular university practices and regulation.

A total of nearly seventy per cent of the continuing students were eligible to continue their academic work in the fall 1970; thirty-seven per cent were eligible to continue without any special action; thirty-three per cent additionally

were continued by special committee action as above and on the recommendation of the Director of the Program.

A distinction needs to be made in terms of freshmen who participated fully in the services of the program and those who did not.

Of the 60 E freshmen enrolled both semesters 1969-70, forty-five participated in the Transitional Year academic assistance services and fifteen did not take advantage of these services. The cumulative grade point averages of students who did not participate suggest that indeed this was a group that needed less academic assistance than those who elected to participate. However, needless to say, it is likely that the freshmen who had below a "C" average who did not accept the special services of the Transitional Year, might have done considerably better had they utilized these services.

TABLE II

COMPARISON OF E FRESHMEN, TRANSITIONAL YEAR:
STUDENTS FULLY PARTICIPATING VS STUDENTS PARTIALLY PARTICIPATING

Classifications	"E" Freshmen Participating		"E" Freshmen Partially Participating	
In good standing	12	(26.65%)	7	(46/65%)
On probation	12	(26.65%)	7	(46.65%)
Special probation	13	(28.9%)	———	*
Ineligible	8	(17.8%)	1	(6.7%)
Totals	45	(100%)	15	(100%)

* Full participation required for "special probation"
(special probation assigned by committee action. 15 "E" freshmen petitioned for continuance. 13 approved, 2 denied.)

There were thirty-seven freshmen or 82 per cent who participated in the academic services of the program who are eligible to continue in the fall 1970.

Seventy-three (73) per cent of the "E" freshmen not fully participating in the Transitional Year were eligible to continue in the fall 1970.

However any comparisons between the group which did not elect to participate in the academic services of the Transitional Year and the group who did can be misleading for several reasons.

1. Students who elected not to participate may have indeed not had the critical educational deficiencies of their peers. In recognizing this fact and in saying, in effect, that "we do not need this help"---they may have been partially correct. Indeed their academic records and classification June 1970 would tend to bear this out. However it may also be noted that perhaps even better work could have been accomplished had the Transitional Year academic services been utilized. Since more than forty-six (46) per cent of these students are now on probation it is likely that a little extra assistance could have been beneficial.
2. The group who elected not to participate is the smallest of any group under consideration.
3. The students who elected to participate had serious educational deficiencies. Even with recognition of their need and participation in the program, they were a generally

academically weaker, less able group than the other group. In other words, the students "self selection" process with regard to the Transitional Year indeed seemed to make two completely different groups, which then cannot be legitimately compared.

A breakdown by classification and academic standing of all Transitional Year students (2 semesters) 1969-70 follows:

TABLE III
ACADEMIC STANDING OF TRANSITIONAL YEAR STUDENTS
ENROLLED FALL AND SPRING SEMESTERS(1969-70)

(as of June 1970)

Classifications	"E" Freshmen		Continuing Students		Total No. Students	
In good standing	19	(31.7%)	9	(21%)	28	(27.1%)
On probation	19	(31.7%)	7	(16.2%)	26	(25.3%)
Special probation	13	(21.6%)	14	(32.6%)	27	(26.2%)
Ineligible	9	(15%)	13	(30.2%)	22	(21.4%)
Totals	60	(100%)	43	(100%)	103	(100%)

Summary

The Transitional Year 1969-70 served a group of more than 133 students from the inner city area who could be termed "disadvantaged". The areas of disadvantage were economic, social, and educational. The Transitional Year program was one primarily of special academic help and assistance--although vital and related university services were also provided.

The entire thrust of the Transitional Year is to assist the inner city student in what is the most difficult period of adjustment to college work and experience. This assistance takes the form of special counseling, tutoring, academic advising and planning, and developmental courses.

Eighty-five per cent of the entering freshmen in the Transitional Year 1969-70 who completed both semesters were eligible to continue at UMKC in the fall semester 1970. This is without any change or adjustment of any regular university academic policy concerning eligibility. Considering the low rate of success of inner city students attending UMKC in past years, this percentage suggests the effectiveness of the program and its value to the student participants.

Nearly 70 per cent of the continuing students were eligible to continue under regular university policies. This group included students who had had more educational deficiencies and problems than the former group, but many were beginning to make significant progress in their second year at UMKC.

In the freshman group particularly the academic attrition was not

materially different from the attrition generally in the entire freshman population.

Some aspects of Transitional Year 1969-70 were revised to resolve problems which were evident the first year. These included the handling of the developmental courses and some change in their content, the development and enlargement of tutoring services, and a more sensitive approach in counselling regarding educational need and deficiencies.

The experience of the University of Missouri-Kansas City in the Transitional Year 1968-69 and 1969-70 undoubtedly served as one of the strongest factors in gaining approval to the request for federal funding for 1970-71 under the Special Services Act of the Office of Education. The Transitional Year 1970-71 has been continued with federal grant money.

Funding for Transitional Year from the University of Missouri under the Urban Problem Solving grant thus not only enabled the College of Arts and Sciences UMKC to present a significant and successful educational assistance program to disadvantaged youth from the inner city and enabled more of those students to attend and successfully compete at UMKC, but also formed the essential base for UMKC's consideration for support under a new federal program designed to assist disadvantaged youth in higher education.